

Dumont Shade Tree Commission Meeting minutes
September 15th, 2014 7:30pm Dumont Senior Center

Sunshine Law: The Dumont Shade Tree Commission has complied with the open public meeting act, having sent notice to The Record, Ridgewood news and filed with the Municipal clerk and posted on the Borough's Bulletin Board.

Present: Tom Fisichella, Kathy Sheridan-Parrish, Abbie Slaman, Sally Tayeb,

Present via teleconference: Ray Slaman, Mike Kuhn

Guests: Rachel Bunin, Barbara Correa-council liaison, Darlene Minko, Mary Bobek

Absent: Larry Tobias

Tom Fisichella proposes to call the meeting to order. Kathy seconds. 7:30pm

1. **Review prior meeting minutes.**
 - a. **Abbie proposes that we accept the July meeting minutes as written. Tom seconds. Passed unanimously.**
 - b. **Abbie proposes that we accept the August meeting minutes as written. Tom seconds. Passed unanimously.**
2. **Homeowner Issues- 84 Hickory.** Ray states that he has not yet met with the necessary parties. The DPW and the DSTC have opposite views. There may be broader issues of safety. DSTC believes that this is a valuable tree and would like to explore options. Ray anticipates that all parties will be able to meet within a weeks' time. A homeowner, Darlene Minko from 477 Marion Ave New Milford, is at the meeting. Her home is behind the Dumont Swim Club. She states that there is a wooded area there and a birch tree with dead branches that fall onto her property. She says she has called and emailed Borough Hall and is frustrated that nothing has been done. She wants the branches trimmed so that they don't fall on her property. She says her fence has been ruined. She says she would trim it herself but wants to do the right thing. Tom will get the paperwork together that authorizes the homeowner to take care of the branch on her own. Another Homeowner, Mary Bobek from 33 Chestnut is at the meeting. She states that there is a town tree in front of her residence and she believes it needs to be trimmed. There is deadwood in the upper branches. It has been trimmed three times in the last three years. Her husband who has lived at the house longer than she says there has been damage from the trees. Damage to cars. She is expecting a baby and has elderly parents and worries for safety. She has seen squirrels going into tree. She would like to know what the process for having a tree removed is. Tom states that this particular tree is a Heritage tree. There has been some trimming done. The diameter of the tree is approx. 30". Tom brings up that at times the Commission allows the removal of a town tree for convenience. The homeowner pays for the removal and the value of the tree. He states that a tree of this age and size could have a value

of \$10,000. Ray says that to remove a tree we look at the risk and safety issues. If the tree is not deemed a hazard there is no more risk than any other tree in town. Ms. Bobek asks what criteria are used to determine whether a tree is a hazard. Tom says that growth, root structure, the canopy leaf population, hollows etc. are looked at. Tom says he has inspected this tree multiple times. He states that there is no leaf or bark discoloring. The tree is approx. 100 years old. The tree has been trimmed. It is already elevated meaning the lower branches have been trimmed. He says this is a healthy tree.

3. **Arboretum-**

a. Maintenance, inspection, general upkeep. - September is Larry's month for inspection. Kathy says she had August and would add that the American Flag needs replacing, it is tattered. Tom tells everyone that the DPW has mowed, trimmed and blew. Tom and Anna planted a corkscrew Willow in the south end of the Arboretum. It was donated by the Bergen County Master Gardiners Association. Sally says Anna put in the copper signs donated by the Hermitage. The signs label the perennials. Tom has the simplified inspection sheet and says that there is a resident rabbit at the arboretum. Kathy says she likes the inspection form that lists all the trees. It is helpful and makes it easier to identify some of the trees even if it is only used for individuals as a reference. Sally will email the corrected form.

Mike asks if the irrigation is working. Tom says DPW says it is not and he will follow up with them. Mike has seen a lock that could be used on the spigot and will send the link to Tom.

4. **Community outreach-**

a. **Newsletter-** Rachel is now working on the Fall Newsletter. She has plenty of content and is hoping to have it out around October 1st. She asks if Mike could email it out to the email list. She asks also if the summer newsletter could be emailed to the list as well. Mike will take care of it.

b. **Library display case-** Tom has reserved a display case at the Library. We have it for the time frame of Arbor Day. It has a 10 inch opening and shelves that can be removed or up and down.

5. **Update from FOTST-** Tom gives a report from the "Friends" meeting. He reports that they are interested in building a shed on the slab. There was a discussion of water from the spigot. It would help when planting to be able to water instead of hauling water to the Arboretum. There is interest in getting an estimate from Weedman to spray twice a year to help with the weed situation. Abbie asks who would pay for Weedman. Ray says he will talk to Perkins and the DPW. Sally brings up grubs and the roses if that could be part of the treatment.

6. **Dumont Day-** Kathy states that it was a long day but looking at all we had on display the DSTC had a nice set up. Tom brings up that the kids' corner that Larry set up was a big hit. Kids came to do the word search and received a prize and parents could find out about what the DSTC has to offer. Ray talked to residents about the Green Neighborhood initiative. A resident was going to pass out information at her block party.

7. **PSE&G-** Tom states that new poles are going in that are 50 to 60 feet tall. Any trees that are lost will be replaced at a 2 to 1 ratio. Sally brings up that maybe one of the trees for replacing could be an American Elm in the wet spot in Memorial Park. It was noticed during Dumont Day. Ray

says he still needs to meet with the PSE&G group about the trees and landscaping that will be put in at the substation.

REGULAR BUSINESS

8. **I-Tree-** none today.

9. Tree Maintenance

a. **Managing tree issues-** Tom says that in the first quarter of 2014 there were no trees timed and no trees removed. During the second quarter we had truck and personnel issues. During that time frame there were 156 trees trimmed and 12 removed. There were a total of 71 requests for tree maintenance. Tom states that at the end of the 3rd quarter he will have a report and see if we are all caught up on maintenance issues.

b. **Reporting Tool-** Tom says the system is working well. Mike asks if the building department will start using the online system. Tom says that at this point they will keep it as it is. Maybe in the future they will transition to the online tool.

10. **Adopt-a-tree** – Mike says there is a spot in the online tool for Adopt-a-tree. Ray says he will put the fall planting in the new data base. Ray also says we have had good feedback on the Green Neighborhood program. Everyone should pass out the fliers. Ray will update everyone at the next meeting.

11. **Town Council ordinance-** Ray states that we are doing well handling the permit requests. We are at a rate of 5/6 per month. We have been able to gather data on the trees that are lost and get an indication of why they want to take them down. Ray says he needs to resolve the fees with the Building Department. Ray says we should continue the discussion to fine tune the tree permit. Sally states that at the end of the last meeting we made headway into the realm of zoning. Ray says it is incumbent upon us to do research. DSTC has been invited to a planning session and Ray will check with John Perkins as to a date for that.

12. **Other Business-** Tom brings up that the “Friends” is getting closer to having the Halloween Parade at the Arboretum. Tom also mentions that he has made contact with two retired train engineers and is working on an idea to build a diorama of the Arboretum as it was in the past. He has found the bulkhead for the pedestrian tunnel. He has old photos. Sally brings up the ideas of having a Scarecrow event and a Farmers Market at the Arboretum in the future. Tom will start a hit list of ideas. Tom also brings up that the center for food action is now working a pantry out of the Senior Center and Donna is looking for volunteers. Sally also brings up the convention in Cherry Hill. It is the 24th and 25th. Ray says he will talk to John Perkins to authorize attendance by some members of the DPW.

Mike proposes we end the meeting. Kathy seconds. 8:43pm